

Electronic Sources. Relatively few people accessed electronic information services on a regular basis. Some had tried various services but had found that they either "did not produce results" or were "too difficult to access".

The use of electronic sources was particularly prevalent among participants in the Halifax group, who viewed themselves as leaders in the use of electronic information.

The services mentioned include:

- Participants mentioned that they receive orders by fax as a result of being listed on BOSS or with Canadian embassies abroad. For some, these fax orders were an important source of business. They also mentioned that faxes are received on a periodic basis from External Affairs and International Trade notifying them of upcoming trade shows and missions.
- A couple of people mentioned that they access the World Trade Centre network for business opportunities. However, they mentioned that this source had failed to generate sales for their business (because business-specific opportunities were not listed).
- Some commercial service companies also access tender information electronically through the World Bank.
- Several people mentioned that they were subscribers to the federal government's Open Bidding Service (OBS), but that the service had failed to generate opportunities which were relevant to their business.
- Some participants also mentioned that they had accessed services such as DIALOGUE which offer a broad range of information. However, they found these services to be difficult to access, with most eventually resorting to personal contacts for required information.

While electronic services are well positioned to serve the needs of business users, some people cautioned against services which:

- do not provide business-specific information;